

TRAIL COUNT

Perceptions from a decade of counting & surveying

Decade in Review
10-Year Report



The City of San José's Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services has been conducting an annual count and survey of trail users over the past decade. Reflecting on all this data confirms or debunks perceptions. Here's San José Trails' **Top 10** list:

1. **Gap closures have significant impact:** In 2008, development of the Airport Parkway Under-Crossing closed a gap along the Lower Guadalupe River Trail. Trail Count documented an **86% increase in travel** over 2007 usage numbers. Usage along this trail system has continued to climb.



Close Gap =
86% increase

2. **Build trails and they will come:** San José had 39.8 miles of trails open to the public in 2007 and 67% had a paved surface. In 2016, there are nearly 58 miles of trails, with 81% being paved. Trail usage has increased 9 of 10 years and follows the growth and improved quality of the trail network. As one example, the Guadalupe River Trail at Coleman Avenue saw 243 users in 2007 and 1,267 in 2016 - that is a **422% increase over the decade**.



3. **Highly-used trails may encourage more women to use trails:** In 2008, Trail Count found that 25% of trail users were female. This percentage has increased over the years, along with overall trail usage. Women now represent 44% of trail users per Trail Count 2016 survey. The national average is between 10% and 25% sourced from a variety of studies.



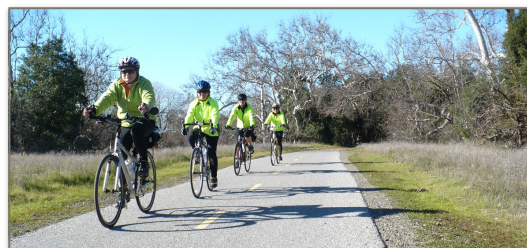
4. **Recessions may lead to short-term mode shift:** The “great recession” of 2007-08 saw an increase in persons reporting use of trails for commuting (active transportation); from 32% in 2007 to over 50% in 2008. The rate had returned to 35% per the Trail Count 2016 survey.

5. **Paving trails draws more walkers:** The percentage of pedestrians has increased from 28% to 45% over the past decade. Pavement appears to make trails more accessible to all users. The Trail Network is now 81% paved, in 2007, it was 65% paved.



6. **More trails are encouraging shorter trips:** More people report using trails for trips between 1 and 6 miles - we saw a 45% to 61% increase over the decade. The number of long-distance trail users stayed about the same; 28% to 24%. This may be because the expanding and higher quality network is being developed near more dense housing and employment (Downtown and north San José).

7. **More trails mean more fun:** We ask trail users about their primary motivation for use of trails. In 2009, 46% reported “fun” as their motivator, 70% reported fun as their motivator in 2015.



8. **More people increases sense of safety:** A majority of trail users have reported feeling safe and very safe along San José trails over the past decade. The number continues to increase, 55% in 2008 and 77% in 2015.

9. **Trails are a way of life:** In 2008, 75.2% of respondents visited trails daily to several times per week. The percentage had not changed in 2016, when 75.5% reported frequent weekly visits.

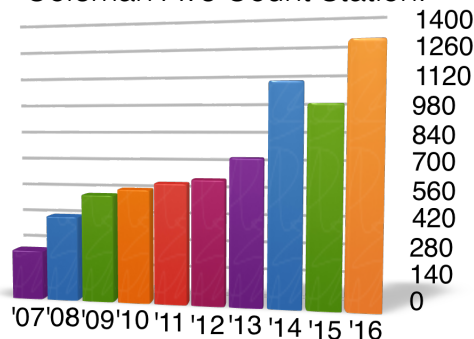
10. **Gas prices go up and down - Trail usage increases:** We did not find a correlation between fluctuating gas prices over the decade in regards to continuous increases in trail usage.

100-Month Gas Price Chart

108 Month Average Retail Price Chart



Coleman Ave Count Station:



Visit [San José Trails website](#) > [Trail Count](#) for full data set